

Message Text

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64

ORIGIN SS-15

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CCO-00 SSO-00 /016 R

66911

DRAFTED BY S/S:DMACK:WES

APPROVED BY S/S:DMACK

----- 116960

P 242139Z NOV 76 ZFF4

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY PRIORITY

UNCLAS STATE 288364 TOSEC 310045

FOL REPEAT KUWAIT 5519 ACTION SECSTATE INFO ABU DHABI
BAGHDAD DOHA JIDDA SANA TEL AVIV DTD 24 NOV.

QUOTE

UNCLAS KUWAIT 5519

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EGEN, ENRG, KU

SUBJECT: AKINS VISIT TO THE MIDDLE EAST

1. LOCAL PRESS NOVEMBER 23 CARRIED REPORTS THAT JAMES AKINS, FORMER U.S. AMBASSADOR TO SAUDI ARABIA, ARRIVED IN KUWAIT EVENING OF NOVEMBER 22, ON A FACT-FINDING TOUR OF THE GULF AREA TO OBTAIN VIEWPOINTS DEALING WITH DIVERSE ISSUES. AKINS HAS ALREADY VISITED NORTH YEMEN AND SAUDI ARABIA, THE LAST AT THE INVITATION OF PRINCE FAHD, ACCORDING TO AL-WATAN. REPORTEDLY, AKINS INTENDS TO GO ON BOTH QATAR AND UAE, AND POSSIBLY IRAQ AS WELL. AKINS MET WITH REPORTERS AT KUWAIT AIRPORT UPON ARRIVAL, AND GAVE EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW TO AL-WATAN.

2. PRESS REPORTS ALL SPECULATE THAT AKINS IS ACTING AS A SPECIAL ENVOY OF PRESIDENT-ELECT CARTER. ONE PAPER, AL-ANBAA, STATED POINT BLANK THAT THIS WAS THE CASE, WHILE OTHER PAPERS IMPLIED IT. AKINS HAS, HOWEVER, REPORTEDLY DENIED THAT HE IS ACTING AS A CARTER EMISSARY. IN AL-WATAN INTERVIEW, HE STATED THAT BOTH

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HE AND MR. CARTER ARE "STILL ORDINARY CITIZENS AND DO NOT REPRESENT

ANY OFFICIAL OFFICE" YET, THOUGH AT THE SAME TIME HE DID NOTE THAT PRESIDENT-ELECT IS A PERSONAL FRIEND WITH WHOM AKINS HAS WORKED, BOTH WHEN LATTER WAS GOVERNOR AND DURING RECENT ELECTION CAMPAIGN. (IN TELEPHONE CHAT WITH DCM, AKINS CONFIRMED THAT HE WAS NOT A CARTER ENVOY, BUT STATED THAT HE DID INTEND TO REPORT TO PRESIDENT-ELECT CARTER UPON HIS RETURN).

3. ONE PRESS REPORT INDICATED THAT AKINS HAD BEEN INVITED BY GOK OFFICIALS, AND NOTED THAT HE WAS MET UPON HIS ARRIVAL BY A REPRESENTATIVE OF GOK OFFICE OF PROTOCOL, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, ANOTHER, UNCONFIRMED, PRESS REPORT INDICATED THAT HE WOULD MEET DURING HIS STAY IN KUWAIT WITH MINISTER OF FINANCE AL-ATEEQY.

4. DURING AIRPORT PRESS CONFERENCE AND IN PRIVATE AL-WATAN INTERVIEW, AKINS COMMENTED ON SEVERAL TOPICS. ON OIL PRICES, AKINS NOTED THAT IT WAS DESIRABLE TO REACH AN ACCORD BY WHICH OIL PRICE INCREASES WOULD BE REGULATED OVER A TEN YEAR PERIOD, IN TERMS OF A FIXED AND PERMANENT DOLLAR RATE, TO ALLOW INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES TO DEVELOP ALTERNATE ENERGY SOURCES, AND TO PROTECT OIL EXPORTING NATIONS AGAINST EROSION OF THEIR PURCHASING POWER. AKINS ALSO NOTED THAT OIL PRICE INCREASES OF ANY LEVEL AT PRESENT TIME WOULD CAUSE DIFFICULTIES, BUT THAT AN INCREASE IN EXCESS OF 10 PCT WOULD CAUSE A WORLD CRISIS. ON POSSIBLE MILITARY OCCUPATION OF OIL PRODUCING COUNTRIES, AKINS REITERATED HIS POSITION THAT ANYONE THINKING OF SUCH A STEP WOULD BE A FOOL. HE EXPRESSED HIS TRUST THAT PRESIDENT-ELECT WOULD NOT THINK OF SUCH A THING. ON ARAB BOYCOTT, (BASED) ON RELIGIOUS OR RACIAL GROUNDS. AS FAR AS POLITICAL BOYCOTTS ARE CONCERNED, THESE HAVE BEEN PRACTICED BY THE US ITSELF WITH EASTERN EUROPE, CUBA AND OTHER COUNTRIES FOR SOME TIME. I BELIEVE THAT IT IS EASY TO SHOW THAT THE ARAB BOYCOTT IS FOR PURELY POLITICAL REASONS".
MAESTRONE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TOSEC, PRESS COMMENTS, INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION, PETROLEUM, VISITS, POLITICAL SITUATION, PRICES, BOYCOTTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 NOV 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE288364
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: DMACK:WES
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760437-1087
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761117/aaaaanth.tel
Line Count: 95
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: powellba
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04 AUG 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <04 AUG 2004 by castels>; APPROVED <23 NOV 2004 by powellba>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AKINS VISIT TO THE MIDDLE EAST
TAGS: EGEN, ENRG, OTRA, ETRD, US, KU, XF, (AKINS, JAMES)
To: SECRETARY
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006